



## PROGRAM SELF-ASSESSMENT SUMMARY 2019

Fairfax County Head Start/Early Head Start program conducted its required annual self-assessment during February, 2019. Annual self-assessment of programs is a requirement of the Head Start Program Performance Standards 45 CFR 1302.102(b)(2)(i). All Fairfax County Head Start/Early Head Start programs, including those operated directly by Fairfax County Office for Children—Greater Mount Vernon Community Head Start (GMVCHS) center—and those operated contractually by family child care programs and by delegate agencies—Higher Horizons Day Care Center, Inc. and Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS)—and all options (i.e., center-based, home-based, family child care and child care partnerships) were reviewed using a locally designed protocol based upon the Head Start Focus Area 2 Monitoring Protocol. Parents and community stakeholders were involved in this process by being interviewed about their experience as well as helping to conduct interviews for each service area. Each service area also completed “data tours” and file reviews. The self-assessment supports the continuous improvement of program plans and service delivery, providing an opportunity for engaging parents and community stakeholders. The following is a brief summary of each service area.

### **PROGRAM DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT** - Program Governance, Planning, Communication, Record-keeping and Reporting, Ongoing Monitoring, Human Resources, Organizational Structure, Facilities, Materials, Equipment and Transportation

#### ***Service area found in compliance.***

There are sound management systems in place that meet or exceed federal standards for Planning, Communication, Record-keeping and Reporting, Ongoing Monitoring, Organizational Structure, Facilities and Materials.

#### **Areas to Strengthen:**

- Support quality transportation services by procuring services of a vendor through a Request for Proposal in Spring, 2019.
- In the area of Program Governance, representation to the Policy Council was low during 2018. It has been remedied, and new representatives have been elected to serve.
- Ongoing planning in data collection, analysis, and outcomes reporting to support continuous quality improvement.
- Strengthen communications and reporting throughout all programs and service areas.

### **FISCAL** - Financial Management Systems, Reporting, Procurement, Compensation, Cost Principles, Facilities and Property

#### ***Service area found in compliance.***

There are sound fiscal systems in place that meet or exceed federal standards for financial reporting, accounting records, internal control, budget control, compliance with cost principles, cash management and administrative cost. Monthly desk reviews and quarterly fiscal monitoring systems provide a strong system of controls to ensure that delegate agencies are using HS/EHS grant funds in compliance with federal rules and regulations. Fairfax County Government’s ability to leverage several funding sources in addition to federal funding in support of the Head Start/Early Head Start and Child Care Partnership & Expansion Programs continues to be a fiscal strength and highlight of the overall program.

#### **Areas to Strengthen:**

The grantee will complete additional cost allocation training and provide technical assistance to support delegates. The grantee will also seek and recommend external training to support the delegate programs.

## **ERSEA - Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance (ERSEA)**

**Area of non-compliance:** Family Child Care option was under-enrolled since October 2017.

Eligibility files were reviewed across all programs and options and were in compliance. Programs are following the procedures detailed in the Eligibility Guidelines and programs' own policies and procedures manuals. For each eligibility record, a cover sheet includes eligibility category, date of intake interview, annual income, and required signatures. Recruitment efforts continue to be strong, as evidenced by parents learning about the program through various methods – word of mouth, flyers, and referrals from other related programs (WIC, Infant & Toddler Connection).

### **Areas to Strengthen:**

The Family Child Care option remains under-enrolled and is under an action plan with the Regional Office. Program is considering an enrollment reduction by 20 slots in Family Child Care and has requested to reprogram funds to be able to enroll families who meet EHS eligibility but not the State Subsidy requirements.

## **CHILD DEVELOPMENT - Individualization, Disabilities Services, Curriculum and Assessment**

**Service area found in compliance.**

Observed warm, nurturing, and supportive interactions between educators and children. Learning environments were supportive of children's learning; they were well organized, not overly stimulating, and had age-appropriate materials. Teachers and providers were able to express understanding of children's development and implementation of the curriculum. The observations and interviews provided evidence that teachers and providers are using data for planning. There was also evidence of instructional supports, especially in language modeling.

Classrooms were observed running smoothly and efficiently; teachers are providing effective strategies for classroom organization. Teachers and providers are providing individualized care for children and demonstrating positive inclusive practices.

### **Areas to Strengthen:**

- Ensure that teachers and providers are receiving sufficient professional development in Early Childhood Education, Creative Curriculum, and Teaching Strategies GOLD.
- Provide more professional development and coaching around instructional support, to help increase teacher and provider support for children's higher-level thinking.
- Provide additional supports for children who are dual language learners, particularly for infants and toddlers.
- Strengthen curriculum fidelity and improve the use of data reports for teachers, providers, and administrators.

## **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - Family Partnership Building, Parent Involvement, Community and Child Care Partnerships**

**Service area found in compliance.**

Programs are providing intentional and individualized family engagement services. The programs offer multiple family engagement opportunities including participation in parent meetings, trainings, and Policy Council, volunteering in classrooms and attending program events. Engagement of families in the program and their child's education starts at the time of enrollment in the program. Family Service staff shared their vast knowledge of county and community resources routinely with families and had a clear understanding of their role as a family service worker. Families shared a seamless and supportive approach to services for children with Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

Strengthening parent-child relationships and parenting skills are supported through the programs' implementation of parenting curricula this program year. Higher Horizons and Greater Mount Vernon are using the research-based *Ready Rosie* parenting curriculum. Fairfax County Public Schools are using a locally designed curriculum based on the researched and evidence-based *Mind in the Making* (Executive Functions).

## **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** *(continued)*

### **Areas to Strengthen:**

- Family Service staff will improve ongoing documentation regarding family's progress towards goals.
- County-wide consistency in documentation is needed by family service staff; a County-wide training is being developed.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY** - Child health status and care, follow-ups, child nutrition, mental health, safety practices

### ***Service area found in compliance.***

All programs conduct daily and regular Health and Safety classroom/site visits. This program year, at 45 days all Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms and FCC homes were 100 percent compliant with OHS Health and Safety screening. All children in all programs receive ongoing monitoring of health requirements and support in receiving follow-up care. Programs that serve pregnant women provide strong evidence-based curriculum and health, nutrition, and community resources. All children receive USDA-compliant, healthy and diverse menus that are customized by age and individual nutrition needs. Dental health compliance continues to improve each program year due to effective monitoring, comprehensive dental education and care, and strong partnerships with community dental providers. All programs have regular access to mental health consultants who provide consultation for children, staff, and families. Greater Mt. Vernon Community HS/EHS has strong collaboration among staff regarding Health, Nutrition, and Family Services. Children in the Family Child Care option received individualized care through provider partners and strong relationships are formed through daily contact in the provider home. FCPS has a team approach for enrollment appointments and as needed for other health and nutrition services. At Higher Horizons, on-site kitchen operations are very efficient and proficient at managing allergies and menu changes.

### **Areas to Strengthen:**

- Increase timeliness of follow-ups related to health screenings and needed treatments.
- Strengthen collaboration with community partners to increase awareness of existing resources to address food insecurity.
- Increase resources related to mental health services for all programs.